



Preserving Forest Grove

Newsletter of the Historic Landmarks Board

Spring 2000

Progress on Our Historic District Nomination and questions you may have . . .

As we mentioned in our last newsletter the Forest Grove Landmarks board received a federal grant to complete the survey section of a National Historic District Nomination. The boundaries have been tentatively established as 19th Ave. to 16th Ave. and between Elm St. and BSt. The Board hired Evans and Hatch Associates to complete the survey and the board is also donating a significant amount of time for research. Because of some of our research we renamed the proposed district to the Clark Historic District. In honor of the fact that the land in this neighborhood came from the Harvey Clark original land grant.

Since a Historic District nomination is a long process, we thought you might have a few questions and we wanted to supply some answers. In general the process consists of surveying the given area (section 7, what the board is currently working on) and then completing 10 other sections (this would happen no earlier than next year, and the board will apply for a second federal grant to complete the nomination). After the nomination is complete it goes through a review process at both the state and federal level, then it returns to Forest Grove for a vote by the people who live in the proposed district. If approved it is then listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

SO, What is the National Register of Historic Places?

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture. The register is maintained by the National Park Service in Washington, D.C.

What is a Historic District?

A historic district is an area or neighborhood that has a concentration of buildings and associated landscape and streetscape features (50 years or older) that retains a high proportion of historic character and integrity, and represents an important aspect of the city's history.

How is a district designated in the National Register of Historic Places?

Once the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) receives a nomination document, it is placed on the calendar for evaluation when the State Advisory Committee meets (February, May, October). Then the committee reviews the nomination twice to allow time to evaluate the district and to accommodate public comment. At the committee meetings the nomination is presented then discussed and the public is given the chance to speak. Then the committee determines if the nomination meets the criteria. If recommended by the committee and signed by the SHPO the nomination is then forwarded to Washington, D.C. and the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places decides whether to accept the nomination or not.

What are the implications of historic district designation?

Primarily to be designated is an honor. The benefit of register designation is a fostering of community spirit. Do you like where you live? Living within a district with a sense of pride – you can help keep your neighborhood as you already like it. Also, any restrictions and controls in the district are created by the local jurisdiction, in other words by the Forest Grove Landmarks Board with input from the public. There are NO federal restrictions placed on the property owners provided the property is not benefiting from federal dollars in the tax incentive program (this means the property itself is listed on the National Register and the owner has applied for the tax freeze program).

There may also be financial benefits. Under provisions of the Economic Recovery Tax Act, owners of properties within the district may qualify for a 20% investment tax credit for certified rehabilitation such as rental residential buildings.

Feel free to contact any Landmarks Board member with further questions. Or call James Reitz at the city 992-32000

What is the HLB Renovation Grant Process like?

Scott Rogers Finds out. . .

One of the downsides of owning an older home is the seemingly endless list of repairs and maintenance. Leaky roof? Flaking paint? Sagging front porch? The Forest Grove Historic Landmark Board understands that the cost of upkeep on these homes can be overwhelming, and have made financial assistance available. The Board receives an annual sum from Federal funds that is specifically allocated toward these kinds of projects – the theory being that if we can repair houses – versus demolishing them and polluting the landfills – we will all be better off. Qualified applicants can receive \$1,000 or 50% of a project, whichever is less, once a year, towards home repair while the money lasts.

One of the people who have taken advantage of this assistance program is Patricia Keeney, the owner of a charming house on 18th Avenue. Ms. Keeney has applied for and received assistance twice within the past two years, most recently this past January. Curious as to how the process works from an applicant's point of view, I decided to ask Ms. Keeney a few questions.

SR. How did you learn of the financial assistance made available by the Historic Landmark Board?

PK. I learned of the available funding through the home's previous owners and the Historic Landmark Board itself.

SR. How would you rate the application process? Any substantial hoops to jump through?

PK. For the most part, the whole application process was relatively straight forward. However, there was some confusion as to whether or not I needed to be present at the time the Board reviewed my application. Other than that the process was hassle-free.

SR. How was the Historic Board's involvement? Did the Board provide valuable feedback and suggestions?

PK. I have actually had involvement with the Board on three occasions, two of which included the rehabilitation grant. On all three occasions though, the Board asked good questions and was very supportive of what I wanted to do.

SR. After approval from the Board, what next?

PK. Provided that there weren't any open issues, such as checking with the city about necessary permits or other restrictions; it was simply a call to the contractor to get the job going.

SR. Once your project was completed, how long did it take until you received the funds?

PK. Not very long at all. On my previous grant I just called James Reitz at City Hall once the project was completed, and soon after, one of the members of the Board stopped by. Within just a few weeks I had a check.

SR. All in all, were you pleased with the entire process? What changes would you suggest?

PK. All in all, I think that this is a great program. My only surprise came when I learned that the available funds had been decreased. Other than that this is a good thing for homeowners.

Please remember that funds are allocated on a first come, first serve basis. For those of you with additional questions concerning Rehabilitation Grant requests, or any other questions concerning the Historic Landmark Board, please contact either James Reitz at City Hall or any of the Historic Landmark Board members.

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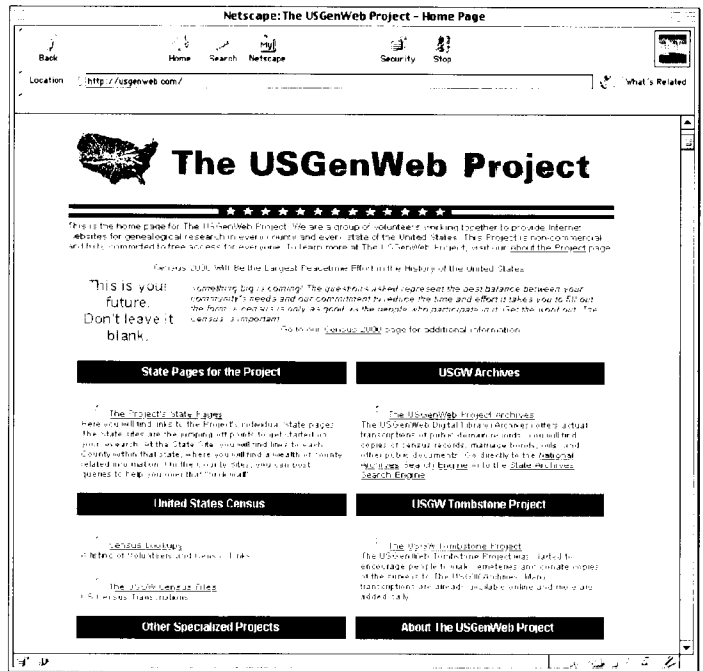
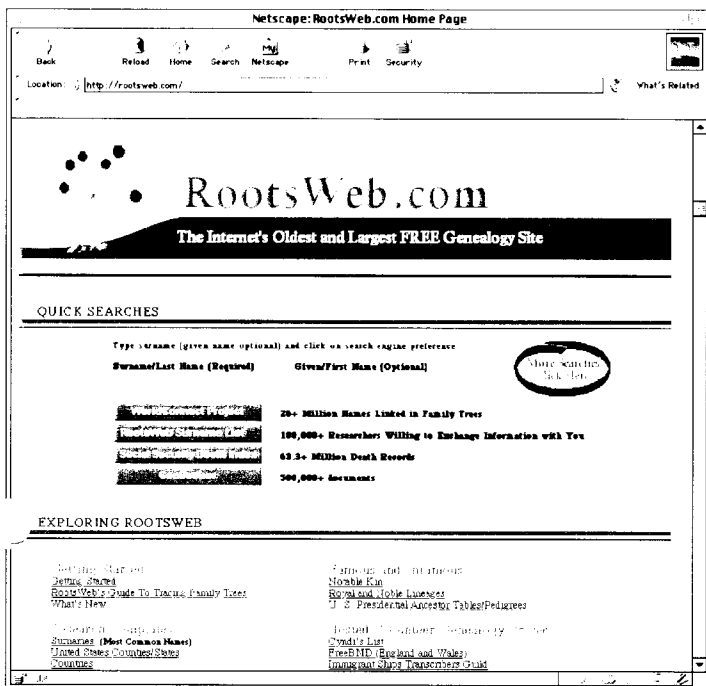
Discover Internet Sites for Genealogical Research

- Kim Fitzgerald

Over the past couple of months the Landmarks Board has been doing genealogical research on a list of names given to us by the consultants who are doing the National Register District Nomination. We have been trying to discover when these people died so that we can locate their obituaries in the local paper. These obituaries are very useful because they provide insight into the lives of the people that lived within the district we will be nominating for the National Register. It has been exciting and very interesting doing the research, and I have discovered several very useful internet sites that are available to help those interested in doing research on their family histories.

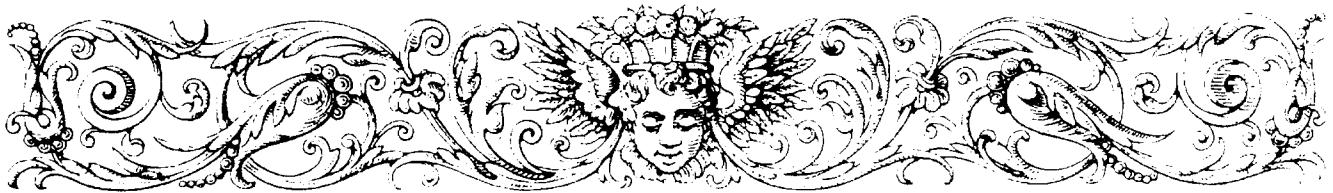
The largest site I have found is <http://cyndislist.com>. It is simply a list of genealogical sites available on the internet. It has 55,550 links in over 100 categories.

The most comprehensive site I've found is <http://usgenweb.com>. This site is free (a lot of the genealogical research sites have membership fees). It offers actual transcriptions of records like census records, marriage bonds and wills. This site also offers a National Archives and State Archives search engine. The most interesting service it offers is the USGW Tombstone project which encourages people to survey cemeteries around the country and donate the completed surveys to USGW. Links to these surveys are available and can be searched at this site.



The most useful site I discovered is at <http://rootsweb.com>. This site offers two very valuable services. The first is it allows you to search the social security death index. This allows you to locate a person who has died anywhere in the US (since 1961), using only their name. You can specialize the search, by defining the location as well. The search can provide you with very useful information, such as when and where they died, as well as their social security number. They also allow you to search the Rootsweb Surname List which is a list of 782,000 surnames from people around the country. It allows you to do a search on the exact spelling of the name, as well as a "soundex" and "metaphone" search, which will let you locate names of individuals who sound a lot like the name you are searching for. This is very useful when you've run into a "brick wall" in your research, when often times the problem is that a name is simply misspelled. There are also some links to other very interesting sites, such as the links to the Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild, where you can search the transcribed lists of passengers who came to America on immigrant ships.

Good luck to you if you decide to research your family history and fill out your family tree. This is an exciting time to be doing this kind of research. For more information you can also contact the Washington County Family History Society at 357-8301. There are more resources available now than there have ever been before, and all you need are your computer and modem!



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Preserving Forest Grove is a quarterly newsletter published by the Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board to help fulfill its duty of public education regarding the preservation of cultural resources. If you would like to be on the mailing list, please call James Reitz at 992-3233.

Resource materials - that's what's available at the history resource room. Resources like the Joseph Gaston Books (biographies), a collection of census' starting in 1910, older copies of the business directories from the 1800's to 1960. They also have old photos of Forest Grove's past, and maps of our town that go back to original land claims. Individual biographies are also available of our town's founding fathers and other prominent citizens.

On January 22, a group of the Landmarks Board members went to the history resource room, to research people who have lived in the proposed National Historical District. Because of the research materials available it made the history of the people and properties easier to find.

Currently we are looking for volunteers, to do data entry. We are compiling past surveys together in Microsoft Access format so future researchers will have easy access to Forest Grove's History at the touch of a mouse. If you are interested in volunteering or have some resources that you would like to donate please contact the History Resource Room at (503) 992-1280 and leave a message, one of The Friends of Historic Forest Grove will call you back.

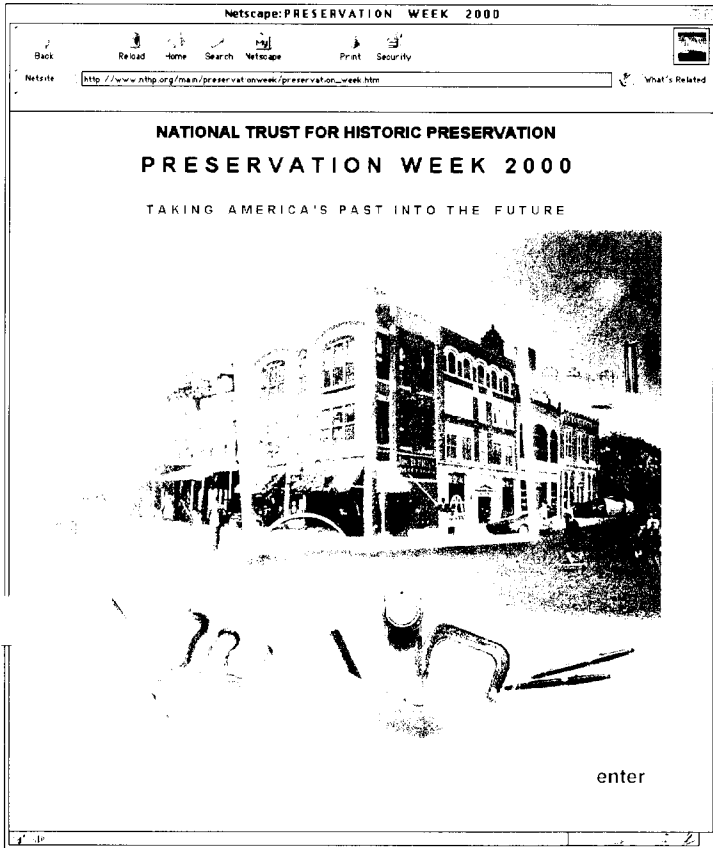
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In this issue:

National Historic Preservation Week May 14-20, 2000

Coming in mid-May is Preservation Week 2000. Sponsored nationally by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. We hope you'll take a few minutes to visit their web site. Also, let's reflect on the tremendous energy for preservation in Forest Grove over the last year many of the downtown buildings have received a facelift and many of our homes too. Consider this town you live in and the history we have here.

Usually the Landmarks Board and Friends of Historic Forest Grove co-sponsor a house tour during this week. Well this year we've decided to move the house tour to September during Founders week - we look forward to seeing you then.



National Trust President Richard Moe welcomes you to Preservation Week 2000

Travelers embarking on a long journey sometimes carry something familiar – a favorite photo, a blanket or pillow – to help ease the uncertainty that can come from being in a strange new place. In the same spirit, as America enters a new century and a new millennium, we should give serious thought to what we want to take with us on this journey into the future.

The theme of this year's Preservation Week, "Taking America's Past into the Future," calls on us to recognize the importance of preserving landmarks from our past as touchstones of stability in times of change. As tangible reminders of the generations who came before us, historic places help create the sense of continuity and community that comes from acknowledging the shared history that has shaped us as a nation and a people.

But this year's theme – like historic preservation itself – is not just about celebrating the past. The theme also challenges us to think ahead, to begin planning now for the opportunities and issues that will confront us in the coming years. It is essential that we be vigilant, flexible and well informed in order to deal with the rapid changes in everything from demographics to technology that are sure to have an impact on our irreplaceable historic places. America's past deserves a bright, secure future – and the future begins right now.

Get Ready to Visit the 7th Annual Garden Tour

Come one come all Saturday, June 3rd from 10 - 2 pm. to the Friends of Historic Forest Grove Spring Garden Tour.

"Just and Old Fashioned Garden" is this year's title and the tour will showcase 9 gardens. Some of the sights you'll see are an English Country style garden, many water features, sidewalk plantings and a secret garden.

The self-guided walking tour begins at Central School (free parking) and tickets will be sold on site - look for the tent).

Admission is \$8, Children under 12 are free.

All proceeds will benefit the History Resource Room.

Look for the New garden tour banner that will be hung as you enter town in late May.

NOTE: the FHFG garden tour committee is looking for a few great gardens. Nominate your favorite garden in Forest Grove. This will provide the Tour Committee with an idea of what interests people who attend the tour. Mail your nominees to: FHFG, PO BOX 123, Forest Grove, OR 97116

